

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed June 8, 2007. Claims 1-18 are pending and Claims 15-18 are allowed. The Office Action rejects Claims 1-14. Applicant amends Claims 1 and 8. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and favorable action of all pending claims in view of the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation the allowance of Claims 15-18.

Previous Remarks

Applicant notes that Applicant inadvertently quoted certain cancelled language of Claim 1 at page 5 of the Response dated August 21, 2006. In particular, Applicant stated “after an etch of an underlying patterned layer that is supported by a spacer layer,” where “that is supported by a spacer layer” had previously been cancelled. Applicant brings this prior mistake to the Examiner’s attention to hopefully clarify any confusion it might have caused.

Claim Amendments

Support for the present amendments to Claims 1 and 8 can be found at least in the Specification on page 6, lines 26-30, and page 14, lines 1-4.

Section 102 and 103 Rejections

Claims 1, 4-5, 7-8, 11-12, and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,700,740 to Chen et al. (“*Chen*”). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, and all other rejections under Section 103, for at least the reasons stated below.

Claim 1, as amended, is allowable at least because *Chen* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest, “selectively removing at least a majority of the spacer layer.” The Office Action asserts that layer 3 in *Chen* is “a spacer layer between a layer and the substrate.” Office Action, page 3. *Chen* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest, however, selectively removing at least a majority of layer 3. Indeed, *Chen* teaches away from doing so because, as appropriately summarized by the Office Action, “*Chen* discloses a method for preventing

corrosion of internconects [sic].” Office Action, page 3. Removal of layer 3 in *Chen* might further expose to corrosion the “contact openings” (col 3, lines 51-52) within layer 3, which would vitiate the purpose of the method disclosed in *Chen*.

In addition, Claim 1 is allowable at least because *Chen* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest, “ashing the surface of the wafer” **and** “photochemically removing the pattern resist that remains **after** the cleaning and ashing steps.” The sections cited by the Office Action merely disclose stripping photoresist “either by using a suitable solvent . . . **or** by ashing” (col 4, lines 27-31), but not by both, and not by photochemical removal occurring **after** ashing the wafer. Moreover, *Chen* discloses using solvent after the stripping process only if “solvent is used for the removal of photoresist,” which again fails to disclose, teach or suggest, “**ashing** the surface of the wafer” **and** “**photochemically removing** the pattern resist that remains **after** the cleaning and ashing steps.”

Thus, merely stripping photoresist “using a suitable solvent . . . **or** by ashing,” as disclosed in *Chen*, fails to disclose, teach, or suggest “ashing the surface of the wafer” **and** “photochemically removing the pattern resist that remains **after the cleaning and ashing steps**,” as recited in Claim 1. For at least the above reasons, Claim 1 is allowable, as are all claims depending therefrom. Favorable action is requested.

Claim 8, as amended, is allowable at least for analogous reasons. In particular, Claim 8 is allowable at least because *Chen* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest, “selectively removing the sacrificial layer.” In addition, *Chen* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest, “ashing the surface of the wafer after said cleaning step” **and** “photochemically removing the pattern resist that remains after the cleaning and ashing steps.” For at least the above reasons, Claim 8 is allowable, as are all claims depending therefrom. Favorable action is requested.

CONCLUSION

Applicant has made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests full allowance of all pending claims.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned Attorney for Applicant at the Examiner's convenience.

Applicant believes no fee is due. However, should there be a fee discrepancy, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 20-0668 of Texas Instruments Incorporated.

Respectfully submitted,

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